



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/765,152	01/28/2004	Wilfried Heide	246980US0DIV	2152

22850 7590 06/16/2005

OBLON, SPIVAK, MCCLELLAND, MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.
1940 DUKE STREET
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314

EXAMINER

EGWIM, KELECHI CHIDI

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
----------	--------------

1713

DATE MAILED: 06/16/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/765,152

Applicant(s)

HEIDE ET AL.

Examiner

Dr. Kelechi C. Egwim

Art Unit

1713

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 04/08/2005.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 10-24 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 13 and 14 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 10-12 and 15-24 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☒ Claim(s) 10-24 are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☒ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 1.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

1. Applicant's election with traverse of species (a), claims 10-12 and 15-24, in the reply filed on 04/08/2005 is acknowledged. The traversal is on the ground(s) that the "Office has not provided any reasons or examples to support a conclusion that the species are patentably distinct" and "the Office has not shown that a serious burden exists in searching the entire application." This is not found persuasive because the examiner believes the patentable distinction between the two species is clear as the inert gas cannot be fed into the kneader and, in the same invention, be wholly generated in the kneader. These are divergent processes with divergent search requirements.

The requirement is still deemed proper and is therefore made FINAL.

2. Claims 13 and 14 are withdrawn from further consideration pursuant to 37 CFR 1.142(b), as being drawn to a nonelected species, there being no allowable generic or linking claim.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

3. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

Art Unit: 1713

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

4. Claims 10-12 and 24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by Tsubakimoto et al. (USPN 4,625,001) or Irie et al. (USPN 4,920,202).

Each of Tsubakimoto et al. (Col. 2, lines 7-20 and col. 3, lines 20-24) and Irie et al. (See examples 1-10) individually teach continuous processes for polymerizing water-soluble unsaturated monomers, such as acrylic acid and acrylamide, with minor amounts of crosslinking monomers in aqueous solution in the presence of fed-in nitrogen inert gas and an initiators, wherein the polymerization temperature is substantially around 80 to 90°C. The polymerizations are carried out in mixing kneaders comprising at least two counter-rotating screws/shafts with kneading elements and the heat is dissipated though evaporation/vaporization, discharged products, and the balance of heat, if any, through the reactor walls over the period of the reactions (Also see in col. 4, lines 30-44 and examples in Tsubakimoto et al.).

It is noted that, in col. 3., lines 25-31, Irie et al. incorporates Tsubakimoto et al. by reference.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102/103

5. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

6. Claims 15-23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tsubakimoto et al. or Irie et al.

While Tsubakimoto et al. or Irie et al. do not expressly measure the percentage of heat loss from evaporation verses the percentage of heat loss from discharged products as claimed, it is reasonable that the percentages of heat loss would be the same as in the presently claimed process since the continuous process, as well as the mixing kneader, of the prior art is essentially the same and the USPTO does not have at its disposal the tools or facilities deemed necessary to make physical determinations of the sort. In any event, an otherwise old process is not patentable regardless of any new or unexpected properties or measurements. In re Fitzgerald et al., 619 F.2d 67, 205 USPQ 594 (CCPA 1980). See MPEP § 2112 - § 2112.02.

Even if assuming that the prior art references do not meet the requirements of 35 U.S.C. 102, it would still have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, at the time the invention was made, to arrive at the same inventive process because the disclosure of the inventive subject matter appears within the generic disclosure of the prior art.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Dr. Kelechi C. Egwim whose telephone number is (571) 272-1099. The examiner can normally be reached on M-T (7:30-6:00).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, David Wu can be reached on (571) 272-1114. The fax phone numbers for


Art Unit: 1713

the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are (703) 872-9306 for regular communications and (703) 872-9306 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (571) 272-1700.

KCE

June 13, 2005



KELECHI C. EGWIM PH.D.
PRIMARY EXAMINER